

Desert Hawk Fugitive Task Force

The Desert Hawk Fugitive Task Force was created to pursue violent fugitives wanted for violent crimes or having violent histories. It has been a model of successful multi-agency law enforcement task forces across the nation. The efforts of Task Force members in apprehending a murder suspect were featured in a July 1998 magazine published by the New York City Police Department.

During 1998 the Desert Hawk Fugitive Task Force members came from the Phoenix Police Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Arizona Department of Corrections, Arizona Department of Public Safety, and the United States Marshal's Service. The 12 individuals making up the Task Force accounted for more than 250 felony arrests of violent fugitives in just the first 10 months of this year. Most of the fugitives were arrested in Maricopa County, but many were located in other states and even other countries. One trail lead from Phoenix through Kansas City on to New York City then to London, England, and finally to Iceland. Efforts are underway to conclude that felon's extradition.

Many of the arrests effected by the Desert Hawk Fugitive Task Force involved high profile or long-time fugitives. Several of the arrestees were featured on episodes of "America's Most Wanted" and "Unsolved Mysteries" TV shows. Another arrestee, murder fugitive Richard Anthony Koris, had been on the run since 1989 when he last avoided capture after a high-speed vehicle pursuit in California.

Not only are the members of the Desert Hawk Fugitive Task Force skilled investigators, they are also dedicated professionals. They are continually placing themselves in harm's way in an effort to apprehend violent felons and protect the community. Frequently the violent fugitives attempt to flee or resist arrest, often creating physical confrontations, with the possibility of gun play ever present.

Because of their professionalism, concerns for the community, and high degree of training, the members of the Desert Hawk Fugitive Task Force have been able to safely apprehend violent fugitives without injury to any members of the public. These efforts exemplify the purpose of law enforcement and truly are a model of successful multi-jurisdictional teamwork. The impressive statistics compiled by the Task Force are a testament to the effectiveness of diverse law enforcement agencies joining in a single effort.